

## **Food Inc.**

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Film Annotation #1

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803 Words

## **Title, director and release year?**

*Food Inc* is a 2008 documentary directed by Robert Kenner examining the industrialized nature of American food and consumption patterns.

## **What is the central argument or narrative of the film?**

The central argument of *Food Inc* is that the industrialization of food poses health risks for all consumers, and exploits workers and the animals involved in this brutal production process. The film does a good job of painting the large corporations as the villains and showing how farmers and workers are victimized by the process as well.

## **How is the argument or narrative made and sustained? (Use concrete examples from the film to illustrate.)**

The argument is made throughout the film by highlighting a particular portion of the food industry and showing how industrialized food has affected it and exposing the dirty secrets of that section of the industry, as well as noting the implications on health.

## **What sustainability issues did you spot? Identify and explain each. (Examples - Political, Legal, Economic, Technological, Media, Organizational, Educational, Behavioral, Cultural, Ecological)**

This film touches a number of different sustainability issues. The film points out how the USDA and FDA are beholden to “big food” through lobbying who help maintain the status quo, which highlights political and legal sustainability issues. All of these things are economic in nature, since industrialization of food developed to keep expand profit margins and revenue. Organizationally, the film shows issues in how farmers are slaves to the big food companies and are maltreated. Lastly, the film highlights the behavioral and cultural issues of how Americans consume garbage food that is heavily subsidized by commodity industries.

### **What parts of the film did you find most persuasive and/or compelling?**

I thought that the footage inside of the factories was enlightening and disturbing. I also found the expose of the corporate policies to be enlightening and indicting, like how they keep farmers oppressed and these policies result in highly engineered and bacteria-ridden products. Lastly, the portion of the film that showed more natural farming practices I found to be particularly interesting and helpful in maintaining some measure of hope.

### **Does the film have emotional appeal to you? Why? (Use concrete examples from the film to illustrate.)**

The film has some effective emotional appeals centered on both humans and animals. The film highlights attempts to pass "Kevin's Law" and tells the horrifying story of a toddler who dies because of e.coli in meat, which definitely appeals to emotion. Also, showing how animals are maltreated and commoditized makes the viewer identify with the animal as a fellow organism, and challenges them to not just view their food as a hunk of protein.

### **Does the film rely more on science or emotion? (How does the film balance the scientific argument and the emotional argument?)**

I feel that the film relies mostly on facts and historical events, and uses the emotional element to support the rest of the film. The film documents actual occurrences inside factories and on farms, and some of the images may be emotional for some viewers but ultimately they satisfy the end of being investigative.

### **Does the film want you to do something? If the film does suggest action, do you think it is a good idea? Will the suggested action help?**

The film is refreshing in that it has very clear cut and approachable calls to action. It recommends that viewers "vote to change the system, three times a day" implying voting with your food purchases, as well as advocating for only buying from ethical and transparent companies and buying in season produce. It also makes the recommendation of buying organic, and from farmers markets and doing your own gardening if you can. Viewers are encouraged to make sure school boards offer healthy lunches and that food stamps

are accepted at farmers' markets. The last call to action is make your voice heard in government to introduce helpful regulation. I think all of the calls to action are clear and helpful.

### **Are there other actions that are not suggested that should be taken?**

I feel as though the film was pretty comprehensive in its suggestions, and I'm not knowledgeable enough to spot any shortcomings in the recommendations.

### **What was the target audience for this film? Why?**

I feel the target audience for this film was probably middle and upper middle-class Americans, because much of the film shows how lower income people are marginalized by this system. There is a subtle implication that the way they can be helped is by people with more buying power affecting change, which could be seen as patronizing. The film doesn't offer much practical advice for those struggling to make ends meet to live healthier and have their voices heard.